"The Truth shall make you FREE."—Christ.

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HELL PREFERRED TO HEAVEN.

It was in the year 1841 or 1842, a dark cloud of fanaticism was seen rising near our town, from one of our churches. It gathered, thickened, and blackened, spreading its dusky mantle wider and wider, until the second and only remaining church was enveloped in the smoke. Lightnings of wrath were now seen, darting from one to the other, while the thunder of damnation rolled its harsh notes from church to church. Flash after flash, and clap after clap, came pealing forth, until wild consternation was spread from house to house. Indeed, so great was the excitement, that despair assumed the place of hope; and fearful forebodings drove from the mind the last remaining vestige of confidence in God, as a good Creator and Governor. Such are the laws of mental application, that when the fire of false and spurious religion breaks out, it being dependent entirely upon superstition for its fuel, if an individual has a sufficient quantity of this combustible, one spark will kindle it into a flame. Hence it is, excitements of this kind become general in their operations. It was in this instance. When I say general, I do not mean that every one is caught in this evil snare. There are honourable exceptions.

In this town there resided a young man—a student-at-law, whose plain and unassuming manners, depth of thought, originality of ideas, with a firm integrity of heart, won for himself the confidence of the aged, and the smiles of the young. It was thought, by the leaders, an object to secure the attendance of this individual. In the first place, his good name and manly deportment would atone in part for the multitude of knaves and miserable outlaws they had received into full communion. And in the second place, it was well known that he held an influence over quite a number of the most respectable young people in the place; and if they could by any means secure him, they were certain of "nabbing" the rest. On mature reflection it was thought best to get a missionary clergyman, who resided about twelve miles out of town—a man for whom the young student had some respect, and who, up to this time, had taken no active part in the meeting—to pay him a visit, and, if possible, to awaken his mind to what they supposed to be the subject of religion; or, at least, to induce him to attend church. This was most assuredly a wise arrangement on the part of the managers, for it was whispered about the town that the young student had not one particle of confidence in the wild men who were conducting the protracted effort—neither in the sincerity of their motives, nor in the ability of their talents. One day a heavy rap notified him that some one was at the door of his office, and as he hurried across the floor to bid the person, whoever it might be, to enter, his heart fluttered—a smile came over his cheek, for he thought to himself some one had called to request him to attend a suit; but in this he was disappointed, for on opening the door he found the good missionary who had previously been appointed to visit him. After treating each other with that courtesy which might be expected of two gentlemen of their professions, the young student invited him to his fire, requested him to lay by his cloak, and be seated. The clergyman readily complied with these invitations of politeness, and immediately disclosed the object of his visit.

The young student thanked him for his kindness, saying, "Indeed, you must have a very great anxiety for my personal safety and well-being, to come the distance of five miles this extremely cold day to advise me on the subject of religion." The clergyman replied, "Be assured, sir, my anxiety for you is very great. I have remembered you in my prayers, hoping that you might yet be induced to give up the study of law for that of the gospel."

"Well, sir, as you come to advise me on this all-absorbing theme, if you please I will give you a brief sketch of my past experience, that you may the better know how to adopt your remarks to my immediate circumstance and condition."

"Indeed," replied the clergyman, "I should be highly gratified to hear your remarks, and especially as you state the reason, that I may the better know how to adopt what I shall say to the peculiar turn of your own mind." At this cordial consent on the part of the missionary to the young student's request, he proceeded to narrate some of the most striking incidents of his past life.

"It was my fortune to be the younger of two sons of a large family, the remainder consisting of daughters; and as my parents were poor, it required their united and constant exertions to supply the daily wants of those dependent upon them. My father was a mechanic—a carpenter by occupation. For this reason it became necessary for him to be a part of the time from home. This to him was a trial; for no man loved his home and the society of his family better than he. For his wife and children he laboured with unremitting toil and energy, and I do say there never was a kinder father. From the earliest period of my recollection I was so extremely fond of his company, that I have watched his noble and manly form until he was out of my sight; and then I have sobbed and sighed because I could not accompany him. More than this, I have lingered around the spot watching and waiting his return, until nature was exhausted. With my eyes turned in the direction he had gone, I have fallen asleep. While in this defenceless attitude, my mother has more than once rescued me from the burning rays of a mid-day sun. Never—no, never, while memory proves true to record one single event of my life, can I forget his endearing smiles and caresses. What, though he was poor? he never failed to throw around me that paternal fondness and protection that is due from a father to his offspring. It was he who, after toiling through a long day, 'dandled' me upon his knee, and delighted me with his enchanting stories. But sudden and mysterious changes come over the inhabitants of this world. Families are broken up—parents die, and children are scattered; and you see, sir, it is impossible for me to suppress a tear even at this period, when I tell you that while my father was toiling for the benefit of a helpless wife and dependent children, he was killed instantly by the fall of a tree. I would not attempt to describe to you the burning grief and bitter anguish of my sorrow-stricken mother, brother, and sister, when his lifeless form was laid before us. The day was now for ever past when we could meet around one common altar, blessed and happy. Our brightest hopes and purest joys were now cut off, and the family clothed in the habiliments of mourning and sackcloth. My father professed faith in the doctrine of Universalism, and died without that change which you deem necessary to prepare one for a future heaven of happiness. I was now left to feel the cold and unpitying hand of charity. I was small in size—a pale-faced boy, eleven years of age, when turned out into a world of folly and of crime; deprived of a fathers's counsel, as well as his strong arm of protection, I must now, defenceless and unguarded, 'meet the ills of life single-handed and alone.' True, I had a mother, but her means and ability were inadequate to the task. She was a member of the Baptist church, and, as a natural consequence, sought homes for her children among that class of professing Christians; and the deacon was kind enough to throw open his doors for my reception. I will cast no reflections, any further than to say, he was a man who loved the good things of this world.

"He was careful to lay up his treasures where thieves could not break through and steal, and if moths corrupted them

it was because it was not in the power of his sagacious mind to prevent it. To say the least, he required more of me than my feeble and emaciated frame would allow me to perform."

"But," said the clergyman, "had you no relatives who were willing to render you assistance?"

"I might have stated to you, sir, before, that after the death of my kind father, an uncle, who resided about two hundred miles east, wrote for me to come and live with him; but it was difficult at the time for my mother to raise the amount of money necessary to defray my expenses; and besides, she had quite as much confidence in the deacon as my uncle; and then, again, if I remained in the neighbourhood, she could have the pleasure of seeing me, which you know must be a great satisfaction to a mother who loves her children. And it was indeed a matter of fearful doubt in her own mind whether I ever recovered my health or not. These circumstances taken into consideration, it was her choice to have me live with the deacon of her favourite church. Consequently I wore away three years of toil and sorrow, without improving my health or gaining ten pounds weight. The smiles of my affectionate father were now changed for the frowns and abusive epithets of a master. The world had now nearly lost its beauty and its charms for me. I excluded myself, as much as possible, from the company of my own age. True, I was naturally light-hearted and happy, but my mind and feelings had undergone a change, and all nature appeared dressed in the gloom of autumn. From the time my uncle wrote for me to come and live with him, it was impossible for me to give up the idea of complying with his request. He was my father's brother, and I fully believed he would throw around me that support and protection that my tender age and feeble health so much needed. The neighbours had now become satisfied that my present treatment was by no means calculated to improve my health, or lay a foundation for my future success in life. With their advice I resolved to place myself under the protection of my uncle; and for this purpose I secured twelve shillings of money—a small sum, it is true, to defray my expenses a distance of two hundred miles, among strangers; but it was the most I could raise. I now made known my plan to the deacon, hoping that he would allow me to keep my clothes; but in this I was disappointed. I received his disapprobation, and he retained them all, save what I had on; but as my mother had not bound me for any length of time, it was at my option to leave, without violating any contract she had made. I then, with my face bathed in tears, thanked him and his lady for all the favours they had conferred upon me, bade farewell, and hastened to take the parting leave of my mother. Having accomplished this, which was to myself and her like plucking the tender flower from its parent stock, I took up my line of march, feeling that I was indeed an outcast and down-trodden victim of misfortune. Nothing of interest occurred until I reached the place of my destination. On inquiring for my uncle, I was informed that he and his family had left. I found by this that my hopes were again cut off, and my prospects blasted. A thousand things rushed upon my mind at once.

"At this time I was fourteen years of age, though no larger than most boys at twelve. This, together with my ill health, rendered my personal appearance not only inferior, but absolutely unpleasant, at least, to those who know not how to pity the woes and misfortunes of others. But here I was among strangers, in the month of March. What to do, or which way to go, was difficult to decide in my mind; but simple or complicated it must be decided, and that, too, by myself. It was now one o'clock p.m., and I finally concluded to return, like the storm-beaten bird, to its own native bush; and as I could find no one in the vicinity of my uncle's late residence who would give me employment, I could do no less than to start on my return immediately.

"Indeed, I did not stop two hours in the place where I had previously anticipated making a permanent home. I travelled until the last tinge of the sun's rays was being extinguished by the surrounding darkness, and put up for the night. In the morning the landlord

made a draft upon my pocket, which drained it of the last remaining copper. I then started on my journey, and travelled until near twelve o'clock.

"And as I had eaten nothing during the day, and but very little the day previous, I was induced to stop at a splendid mansion, to see if I could get employment. On preferring my suit to the gentleman of the house, he told me he would like to hire, but he wanted some one who was older and possessed of a more robust constitution than myself. This settled the question at once. Still, as the family were about gathering around the table, spread with dainties that would make an epicure smile, I thought I would wait a few minutes, expecting they would invite me to dine with them. I stopped until I heard the devoted man ask a blessing, and as it did not embrace me, I cast a wistful look upon the richly furnished table, and with tired limbs, an empty stomach, and a heavy heart, left the house.

"I made several attempts to hire out during the afternoon, but my inability to perform was readily detected by the most superficial observer. The gloom of night had again overtaken me, and I was now destitute of money, tired out, sick, and discouraged. At this moment I discovered a piece of old rejected horse-blanket. I picked it up, folded it snugly together, took a newspaper from my pocket, which I readily converted into a wrapper, and then tied it up in my handkerchief. In this form it made me a nice little bundle. With this in my hand I stepped into a public-house, and inquired of the landlord if I could stay with him over night, gave him my bundle, and requested him to place it where it would be safe, and called for my supper. In the space of fifteen or twenty minutes the bell rang, and I soon found myself seated at the table. Every necessary attention was paid to me, I ate a hearty meal, and being tired I soon took a bed.

"In the morning I ate breakfast with the family. It was now for me to make my escape, without being detected. This I did by amusing myself with the pictures that hung about the room, till the landlord stepped out of the house. I embraced this opportunity to escape; and as I left I thought to myself that I was very well paid for my trouble of picking up the blanket; but in this I soon was mistaken, for I had not travelled far before it occurred to me I had committed an act which was contrary to the advice and counsel of my father, whose memory was still dear to my heart, and which I had fondly cherished with a kind of melancholy delight up to the present moment.

"My conscience condemned me; I felt that an officer of justice would most assuredly overtake me. Prison doors were constantly in my imagination, while bolts, bars, chains, and fetters were ringing in my ears. With hurried footsteps I pursued my course, until my nerves were completely unstrung. I found myself exhausted and fainting, and compelled to stop by the roadside for rest. While seated upon the end of a rail I thought if I could be placed back to the evening before I committed the deception, and knew as much of the consequences of crime as the present, I would have sought a bed of drifted snow for my couch, stretched my weary and emaciated limbs upon its white surface, and with a pure heart, the approbation of my own conscience, and the smiles of my God, expired in peace. The walls of my death chamber would then have been the blue vault of heaven, above and around me, curtained only by the brilliant orbs which hang out their golden lamps, as they wend their course through the immensity of space. In this I spent the most unhappy day of my life. The shades of night were fast spreading their sable mantle over me, and my heart swelled with bitter anguish as the thought occurred to me that now, for the first time, the curtain of darkness was employed to conceal a crime of my own. Indeed, so guilty had I felt through the day, that I had not entered a house, or spoken to any person, or taken the least refreshment into my mouth, save now and then a little snow. A public-house being near, with fearful and trembling steps I entered it, not, however, with the idea of remaining over night; the most that I expected was that it would furnish me with a brief stopping-place, until they close the doors for the night. As I entered I saw that

everything presented the appearance of taste and elegance; I took a seat near the back part of the room, by the side of a large reading-table, well furnished with the newspapers of the day. With scarcely strength sufficient to support myself in a chair, and had occupied this position but a short time, when I was noticed by the gentleman who kept the house. He immediately approached me, took me by the hand, and inquired if I was sick. But I was too much depressed by grief to reply. He then inquired if I was travelling. By this time I was under the necessity of wiping the tears from my eyes with the back of my hand, having disposed of my handkerchief the night before. He then inquired if I would not like to take supper. I had now so far recovered my presence of mind that I was enabled to ask him if he would not employ me to work for him. He promptly replied that he would, if I could take charge of a team; and if I could not I must stop with him a few days, until my health was improved; or, at least, until I was in a better condition for travelling. It is enough to say I was made welcome to the best his house afforded. I lived with him two years, and instead of giving me the charge of a team he furnished me with a suit of clothes and sent me to school.

"I soon became as one of his own family. Indeed, if my father had risen from the dead, and found me in my desperate trouble, he could not have done more for my comfort, or the improvement of my health. No pains were spared to make me happy, and to drive from my mind the gloom that was engraven upon my features. Perhaps I cannot give you a better idea of his benevolence and kindness to me than by relating a little incident that occurred about six months after I had found a pleasant home in his family. I ascertained that an inmate of the house, and I believe a nephew of my friend and benefactor, was going directly past the same tavern where I committed the deception; and, as I had ever felt a great anxiety to pay him I had ungenerously defrauded of his just due, I wanted to improve this opportunity, not knowing when I should have another. But how to obtain the means I did not know; then, again, I wanted to send him more than what might be considered a legal compensation; and, as I had already drawn largely on the charity of my friend, I did not like to ask him for the money, and still he was the only man I knew who would let me have the amount I wanted. I finally concluded to ask him for it, on conditions that I would stay out of school and go to work. My health, too, had so far improved, that I felt like taking hold of business; and I finally made known to him that I wanted money, and if he would be so kind as to assist me to it I would stay out of school and work for him. He replied at once that I might have the money, and go to school too. I then took the money, and told the young man how to dispose of it.

"I have now, sir, redeemed my pledge, in relating some of the circumstances through which I have been called to pass, that you may the better know how to adopt your remarks to my condition. I will now barely state to you the impression of my mind, and then pause to listen, with due attention, to whatever you may deem proper to say to me. I have already told you that my father was a Universalist, and that he died instantly, without that change which you think necessary to prepare one for a future state of happiness; and the man with whom I resided two years as a member of his family was a believer in the same doctrine; and from the time I left his house to the present period I have made my home with those who entertain the same liberal views of God and his government. To these people I owe the most grateful feelings of my heart. To them I am indebted for my education, if not for the preservation of my life. Now your doctrine sends not only my father, but all my best and most kind friends, to a world of never-ending misery, and, among the number, the one who took me in when I was homeless, houseless, and friendless.

"He clothed me when I was naked, and fed me when I was hungry. He was to me as a father to the fatherless. He shed tears of pity at the bare recital of my sufferings. Now, sir, if all my best friends—those who have helped me

when it was not in my power to help myself—must go to hell, I do most solemnly declare, in the presence of God and angels, that it is my desire to go with them. I should prefer hell to heaven, if there is no change after death; as I have enjoyed myself much better in the company of my father and the man who received me into the bosom of his affections, when I had nowhere to lay my head, than when in the company of the deacon, whose future well-being you do not doubt. I can most assuredly enjoy myself the best with them in the future world. I would rather linger for ever on the wretched shores of that horrible pit, in search of my father and friends, than to wear the brightest star in a heaven whose only garland is the soul of the damned; and this worn by a God of revenge. It is useless, sir, to talk to me of happiness, while the same voice that gladdened my heart in infancy and sweetened my wakeful moments by painting in blissful vision scenes of future pleasures, that lie far off in the dim distance of coming years, and hushed my agitated bosom to the peaceful slumber of repose, is turned to deathless screams of unmitigated despair! and the countenance that used to beam upon me in tenderness and love is changed to the most hideous contortions of never-ending woe! Demons may laugh, and devils mock at the misery of my father and friends!

"But God forbid that I should ever be changed to such a fiend of darkness, in order to prepare me to enjoy a seat in what you call a heaven of happiness beyond death and the resurrection. Let those believe the horrible sentiment who can. For one, I have not the least idea that God will ever damn his children for entertaining too good or exalted an opinion of himself, or of his moral government, which must be the case if he sends them to hell for believing the final holiness and consequent happiness of the whole human family.

"I have how stated to you the deep impressions that have been made upon my mind by the circumstances by which I have been surrounded; and I wish you to remember that the choice I have made is founded, in part, upon what you believe—that there is to be no change of moral character either at or after death. You will not wonder, then, or think strange of the choice I have made, knowing, as I do, the disposition of the deacon, who is acknowledged to be one of the elect; and the stranger, who so generously snatched me from a wreck of misfortune. It is perfectly natural that I should prefer the society of the latter to that of the former.

"I now tender to you the grateful feelings of my heart for the kind attention you have given to my narrative. The only favour I have to bestow in turn is, to listen with the same patience to the advice you think proper to give me, which I shall do most cheerfully."

The clergyman replied: "Sir, I have heard, with lively and thrilling interest, the description you have been pleased to give of those affecting scenes through which you have been called to pass; and from the deep tone of your expression, and the solemnity of your countenance, I am fully satisfied that it is not in my power, nor in the power of *any* human agency, to change your present opinion. The most I can do is to place before you two alternatives, the joys of heaven and the miseries of hell. This you have anticipated and taken your choice, and this choice has paralyzed and rendered powerless all I could or can say to you; and as the day is far spent I will leave you where I found you, in the hands of him whom we both believe to be a good and a kind Being. Farewell!"—*Star of the West.*

OLD CHILDREN.

"CHILDREN WILL BE CHILDREN."

No, not always; sometimes they are forced into little old men and women. We know well that the above is a time-honoured adage, but like too many of its family, it is not infallible. A late admired author says: "The children of the very poor do not prattle." It is none of the least frightful features of that condition, that there is no childishness in *its* dwellings. Poor people, said a sensible old nurse to us once, do not *bring* up their children; they *drag* them up. It makes the very heart bleed to overhear the casual street talk. It is not of toys, of nursery books, of summer

holidays (fitting that age), of the promised sight of play, of praised sufficiency. It is of mangling and clear starching; of the price of coal and potatoes. The questions of the child, that should be the very outpouring of curiosity in idleness, are marked with forecast and melancholy providence. It has come to be a woman before it was a child.

There are two classes of old children: First, the precocious, or those who are by their friends and themselves thought to be such; who never say anything in baby style, but in the precise words of their parent or teacher; who from hearing their sage remarks, and wise doings, repeated and repeated, become artful, and angle for praise, as does the fisherman for a bite; who, knowing they have a reputation for old age, struggle against nature to maintain it, by abstaining from play and romping, which is as much the lawful business of childhood, as are mercantile pursuits, professional labour, or manual toil, that of years.

But there is another class who have no childhood—no budding time. It is heart sickening to see little children made old by poverty, sickness, or sorrow; but sadder than all, by cruelty, fear, or unkindness.

About twenty years ago there lived in a neighbouring city, a couple, having one beautiful child—a pale little girl, at that time about six years old. The man was a pompous, boastful person; while the wife was meek, retiring, and exceedingly sensitive. Her humble neighbours, won by her gentle ways, sought to extend to her those little kindnesses which nature prompts toward the stranger. But they were often rudely repulsed by the husband for their "officiousness." *Her* home-sick heart fully appreciated such attentions, and she expressed deep gratitude for what seemed to them but common civility. It was wonderful, to one who seldom heard a gentle word addressed to her at home, to receive such from utter strangers. Her husband was a perfect tyrant in his own narrow domain. She felt it in her innocent heart, and showed it in her very look, and tone, and step. The love which had found no answering chord in the heart in which she had a right to find it, soon shriveled up, and changed into submission toward him. But it still bloomed warm and fragrant in another direction. All the strong, pure, undying affection of her woman's heart centred on Essie, the pale, beautiful child.

The daughter was never a moment absent from her mother's side throughout the day; but the moment she heard her father's step at night-fall, she drew her little chair into an opposite corner, folded her tiny arms in her lap, and waited his entrance, so soon had she learned that any show of affection toward her mother was disagreeable to him. She grew old, wise, and calculating. By her acuteness she warded off many a storm of passion, and diverted the thoughts of the angry man away from his poor victim in other channels. She grew so rapidly in wisdom, and took upon herself so naturally the cruel burdens of her mother, that she began, all crushed as she was, to lean upon the child for support, and to trust to her as a peace-maker in all domestic broils, if such they can be called, where all the bitterness and railing are on one side.

But even woman, yielding and hopeful as her heart ever is, cannot always be pierced and trampled upon; the time must come when nature can hold out no longer, when the iron heel treads out the closest entwined life from the body. Her cup was full, and then, when it would hold no more, it fell to the ground—she died. She was now beyond the power of the tyrant. Her ear was proof against the loud unkindness. She had now a place among the meek and pure-hearted of a better land.

Desolate indeed was Essie left. Her mother was borne away. She must emerge from babyhood to womanhood at once. No sports, no toys, no gambol on the green; she must learn, an infant, to do household duty, and obey the word of useful service.

And she did learn, although it was a cruel lesson for her buoyant spirits. But after her only companion was gone she pined away with strange rapidity. Even the harsh man grew alarmed at the work he was doing, and strove to arrest its progress. But it was too late; as well we might expect a tender severed branch to live, after the tree from which it had drawn its life was uptorn and dead.

Pain and weakness were for months the portion of little Essie; and then a deep, hectic fever burned her cheek. One day, being carried to the mirror by the woman who had care of her, she shrieked out, "Oh, my dear mamma, I look just like you now; why can't I go away soon, and be always with you again? I cannot stay longer in this world without you."

A lady, who had known her mother, and sympathized in her sorrows, called one day to inquire for Essie. In the kindness of her heart she brought a gaudily dressed doll, hoping it might amuse the lonely child. Essie took it in her hand, with a wondering expression in her large blue eyes.

"It looks just like a child," she said. "What is it for?"

"It is for you, my dear," replied the lady.

"For me, ma'am? What must I do with it?"

"Why, play with it, of course, my love. It will amuse you and make you very happy."

"Oh, no ma'am," replied Essie, examining the doll; "this thing cannot make me happy. It cannot smile on me, nor kiss me, nor speak fondly to me. But it was very kind in you to bring it, and I thank you very much. Will you not take it home—perhaps it will please your little girl." She knew no children, and she scarcely walked abroad, as her mother had long been too feeble to accompany her, while her father was too selfish to trouble himself for her amusement. She looked almost compassionately at the giver, as if she thought a person must be simple to imagine that a lifeless toy could give pleasure to her careworn heart. Sad, indeed, the lot of children made so early grave and wise. God gives to all an infancy and childhood—times free from care, in which our powers may expand, and we gain strength to bear the burdens of life. *Woe to those who, through cruelty or avarice, rob children of this season, or change it into one of sorrow, anxiety, or toil.* Let children *be children.*

One day Essie said to her nurse, "In heaven, where my mother lives, every one is kind. No one ever gets angry, or speaks loud there. Everybody likes everybody; musn't that be beautiful? Oh, how much I should love to be there, and never be afraid any more."

She died—from some unknown cause. —Perhaps in the hope of atoning for his past unkindness, the heartless man did one generous thing. He caused the lifeless form of the woman, whose heart he had broken, to be taken from the narrow bed, and then laid mother and child in one coffin. It is true the care-murdered innocent little heeded, in that deep sleep, the what in life would have imparted such joy to her lonely heart. She knew not that her cold cheek was again in its old place, pressed close to that of her mother, or that her thin white arm lay across the bosom which used to be her chosen pillow. No; but she did know in that blissful re-union the joy of loving, unrebuked, that angel mother—of being free from the fear of the violent man—of dwelling in peace, without care or anxiety, "where none are ever angry, where none speak loud"—with the God of love.

Few sights are more significant and touching to a teacher's heart, than the group of girls gathered out of many homes around her table. What is to be the earthly future of these youthful beings? That little sunburnt, honest face may be a wife in whom the heart of her husband shall trust, whose clothing shall be strength and honour; that other childish form may yet be a mother, whose children shall rise up and call her blessed; that little one, with the fair rosy cheeks, may, alas, turn into one laden with many lusts, whose ways are the ways of death. Another may be the good and faithful servant, so rare and so precious in the sight of the master in heaven, as well as the master on earth; another yet may be the brawling woman who bringeth woe on all around her, or a busybody, spreading mischief from house to house. But how seldom the question, though largely depending on the other, What will the future of these children be? Fearful is the responsibility, deep the anxiety of those who feel how much of future depend on their faithful application—to pluck out the weed—to sow the good seed—to foster the springing grain—the blessing is promised, and will come, and will not tarry.

THE RELATION OF THIS LIFE TO THE NEXT.

BY THE REV. T. STARR KING.

We must utterly put away the notion that this life—so short, so treacherous, so unequal in its conditions—is our *final* state of probation. Until we do this, until we adopt the highest Liberal Christian conception of its purpose, and its ties to the future, we cannot hold a worthy conception of the character of the Infinite Father; we cannot estimate properly the breadth of the purpose and plan of Christianity; we cannot feel the inmost sanctions of duty; we cannot work wisely, steadily, and with peaceful hearts, for the good of man and the glory of God.

We are not placed here, corrupt in our very constitution, to prepare for a judgment that will decide our destiny for ever, by a fiat of Omnipotence. Man was made to be a recipient of the divine life. We are here to rise by all our faculties to the knowledge of God, the Infinite Father, to an acquaintance with His wisdom, by our intellect; with His art, by our love of beauty; with His law and justice, by our conscience; with His very personal life and love, by our finest spiritual sensibilities; and to be co-workers with Him, to know something of His joy, to be a child of His adoption, a joint heir with Christ, and not simply a creature of his power—by our consecrated will.

On every one of our distinguishing faculties there is the stamp of a great future, the possibility of un-ending growth, the signet of immortality. This world is simply the threshold of our vast life, the first stepping-stone from nonentity into the boundless expanse of possibility. We commence our career here, sheathed in fleshly bodies, to take our first look, through senses, of the riches of Infinite thought; to learn the alphabet of the unsearchable wisdom; to get our eyes trained, little by little, through these physical screens, to see and bear the light of the Infinite glory. This world is the infant-school of the soul and the universe, as spread out before our mortal eyes—the physical universe and the spiritual trials and mysteries of our discipline—is simply our primer, our grammar, our spelling-dictionary, to teach us something of the language we are to wield in our maturity; an unbounded future, a future unfettered by any arbitrary judgments and judicial wrath of God, a future ruled by sleepless and perfect laws of which we are to learn something here, a future for stern and beneficent education and training—such is the vista in which we are to look from this pebble of a planet; such is the scale on which we are to project our life; such is the light in which we are to study the character of God, and the meaning of Christianity.

This life our final state of probation—no opportunity for moral change, for profiting by experience, for spiritual consecration and growth in the unwasting ages of time to come! Think of God creating an *infinite capacity*, and affixing this law to it, that, if it does not develope to a certain degree in thirty years, it shall be prohibited from making any advance afterwards; it shall be arrested by His hand, every stirring and throb of life shall be checked, and it shall for ever be kept in misery, too, for its failure to grow during those few years of trial—infinitely less, in comparison with its whole career, than a second is, contrasted with a life of seventy years! Think of the Infinite Reason ordaining such a government as that! Think of the Infinite Father establishing and sustaining such a rule!

Look at the idea in the light of an illustration. Suppose that three boys—a young Beethoven, a young Newton, a young Raphael, were placed in a thoroughly appointed university, and because they refused to study during the first hour—were even deliberately disobedient and idle, we will say—should be miraculously removed from it by the Infinite Intellect, and immured in a dungeon near those grounds. Soon they see their folly; they feel their ingratitude; the thirst for knowledge, a sense of the unspeakable glory of wisdom, a desire to learn and publish the charm and mysteries of truth, loveliness, and melody, stirs in their bosoms. They pledge themselves wisely and reverently to the objects for which the university was reared. They pray for release, that their faculties

may be consecrated. But no. For that first hour of idleness, they are told that they are never to be permitted to study. No light shall visit them. No beauty shall be revealed to them. No starry wonders shall tempt their reason. No instruments shall provoke their genius for music. The Infinite Reason forbids them ever to learn, or to develope their glorious capacities. To all eternity they are to be kept in that dungeon, willing to study, praying to be allowed to study, burning with the agony of straitened faculties, prevented from dying, all to illustrate the equity of the creative Mind, who, of His own pleasure, affixed that penalty to the wandering thought and mental unfaithfulness of the first hour!

Say nothing now of justice. Can you conceive of the Infinite *Intellect* forbidding a finite mind to learn, because it was once false to its own law? Can you conceive of God interfering by His power to debar a mind from the acquisition of some of His profuse and opulent truth? You can conceive of a mind injuring its own quality, greatly damaging it, by laziness and immethodical habits, and continued violations of its in-wrought laws; but when, through a bitter experience of this waste and wrong, it desires to be loyal again, and begins to be, can you conceive of the *Creator*, the *perfect Intelligence*, doing anything else than offering it welcome to the whole wealth of His truth, and feeling joy in finding a new channel for his wisdom? And can you think of *infinite love* arbitrarily restraining a soul from rising nearer to Him, from flying to him with a penitent prayer, from consecrating itself to His service—forbidding this throughout eternity, on account of its unconsecration and misuse of time in its short hour of earthly experience? The question between "evangelical" and Liberal Christianity is not whether a soul shall not be thoroughly punished, fearfully punished, for evil—nay, the question is not whether a soul may not *choose* to live away from God, and true life, and substantial joy for ever—but this is the question: if a soul is penitent, desires to return, is willing and anxious to be a recipient of the Divine Life and His child, will God arbitrarily and for ever prevent it, having fixed its doom at the day of judgment? Orthodoxy says, Yes. Liberal Christianity says, this is blasphemy against the Infinite. It affirms that there will never be any barrier between the Infinite love and a human soul, but that soul's own alienation. And it declares, with emphasis and joy, against every form of orthodoxy, that there will never be a moment in eternity when it will not be the desire of the Infinite, and for the interests of the universe, too, that the alienation of a darkened spirit should cease.

But it may be asked, is not the transfer from this world to the eternal world a most important and solemn thing? Is not this life, after all, in some way, a probation for the life to come? Is not death a most momentous crisis in our history? Yes, I answer, rightly understood, death is a momentous crisis in our experience—yet not by reversing or annulling the laws under which the soul lives here, but by giving them freer scope; not by sweeping sinful souls under one arbitrary judgment of God, that for ever arrests the possibility of spiritual revival and growth, but by delivering them over to the unembarrassed action of principles that enfold our life here, that rule through the whole spiritual universe, and that continually reveal the providence, and justice, and perfect goodness, too, of the Infinite Lord.

Let us not fail to see that this world is a state of probation or trial for the next, just as all life is preparation and probation for all coming life; and the entrance into the next state is a crisis or judgment time in our career, on the same principle that makes youth a crisis season to show what has been our training and fidelity in boyhood; or manhood, to reveal what has been the experience of youth; or old age, to test the resources and reveal the principles gained and cherished in the preceding years. The laws are solemn enough; the retributions are serious enough, without adding the dreadful and foolish assertion that God will forbid us ever to change, ever to be any better, ever to make any effort to throw off our chains and rise nearer to him.

Religion usually asks, Are you prepared for death? have you an interest in Christ? are you at peace with the

Holy Spirit, so that you can be protected at the last judgment? The question with regard to the next world really is, Are you prepared for life? have you been so quickened by Christ, are you so receptive of the Spirit, have you so faithfully used this world, that you can go into a world where the only resources are those of your humanity, love of truth, delight in the beauty which God reveals, service of His will, joy in the reception of his life?

The great crisis of death is that we pass more intensely into life, and show our fitness for it. The sadness and terror of misusing this world lie in the waste of faculty, or the degradation of faculty, which sin, and sloth, and disloyalty produce. On this ground, the danger of low living here cannot be overrated.

You see a young man squandering his time, and slighting all his privileges in the university where his father has placed him. You know that he has to obtain his living by a profession for which the university supplies the substantial training; and when you see him neglecting his mental fibres, allowing his mind to dissipate its powers, forming no habits of application and labour, laying up no resources, devoting the precious hours to listless or guilty enjoyment, you say that, while the young man is punished continually by the kind of career he is leading, he is moving on to a crisis season—to a judgment-time that opens when he passes from the great school to the work of life. He goes, then, into the sphere where he must depend on his own treasury of powers; he goes into competition with men who have been faithful to their season of privilege; he goes where laziness brings penury, where base enjoyments are stricken from him, where there is a demand every day for the developed powers that he ought to have carried with him from the classes and studies of the college. And yet how terrible his punishment is! He must *un-do*, at bitter cost, every particle of the miserable work which idleness and faithlessness had wrought in his constitution. He must come into harmony with himself and his sphere of duty before he can get a jot of the good which overflows, at the bidding of Providence, into every heart that is prepared for life.

BEAUTIFUL WORLD!

Beautiful world!
Though bigots condemn thee,
My tongue finds no words
For the graces that gem thee!
Beaming with sunny light,
Bountiful ever;
Streaming with gay delight,
Full as a river!
Bright world, brave world,
Let cavillers blame thee!
I bless thee, and bend
To the God who did frame thee.

Beautiful world!
Bursting around me,
Manifold, million-hued,
Wonders confound me!
From earth, sea, and starry sky,
Meadow and mountain,
Eagerly gushes
Life's magical fountain!
Bright world, brave world,
Though witlings may blame thee,
Wonderful excellence
Only could frame thee!

The bird in the greenwood,
His sweet hymn is trolling;
The fish in the blue ocean
Is spouting and rolling!
Light things on airy wing,
Wild dances weaving,
Clods with new life in spring,
Swelling and heaving;
Thou quick teeming world,
Though scoffers may blame thee,
I wonder and worship
The God who could frame thee!

Beautiful world!
What poesy measures
Thy strong flooded passions,
Thy light trooping pleasures?
Muttering, marshalling,
Striving and straining,
Conquering, triumphing,
Ruling and reigning!
Thou bright armied world!
So strong, who can tame thee?
Wonderful power of God
Only could frame thee!

PROFESSOR BLACKIE.

EXPLANATIONS OF SCRIPTURAL TEXTS ADVANCED TO SUSTAIN UNSCRIPTURAL DOCTRINES.

CALVINISTIC ELECTION.

Continued from p. 44.

Exodus iv. 21.—"And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharoah, which I have put in thine hand, but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go." Exodus vii. 13.—"And he hardened Pharoah's heart, that he hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said." Exodus ix. 16.—"And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." The case of Pharoah, and God hardening his heart, has excited considerable discussion. We barely remark there is nothing in the case of Pharoah about his eternal reprobation. Neither do we think it necessary to attempt to explain that God does permit, or it may be, as these passages seem to intimate, God ordains temporal and local evil at times, to work out general and eternal good. If Pharoah was an agent in God's hand to manifest his glory over all the earth, Pharoah will have his compensation in the hands of an all-wise and all-good God.

Exodus xxxiii. 19.—"And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." God is the Sovereign Disposer of his own mercy in his own way. There is no intimation of eternal unkindness to any of the human family in this passage.

Deuteronomy xxix. 4.—"Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day." This passage is very properly read by many critics interrogatively—"Hath not the Lord given, etc."

Samuel ii. 25.—"If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them." The particle rendered *because* should be rendered *therefore*. They would not hearken, therefore the Lord would slay them.

Proverbs xvi. 4.—"The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." From the original this text is capable of a very different translation. "The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, the wicked he daily feeds." A few versions have it —"The wicked are reserved for the day of evil." God makes man upright; men make themselves wicked, and thus bring an evil day: so teach the Scriptures in numerous places.

Psalms cv. 25.—"He turned their heart to hate his people: to deal subtilly with his servants." Some copies of the Scripture have it, "Their heart was turned to hate his people." This is, no doubt, the sense of the passage.

Isaiah vi. 9.—"And he said, Go and tell this people; Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not," etc. The meaning of this passage, which is also quoted in the gospels, is—Ye hear but do not understand, ye see but do not acknowledge, seeing this is the case, ye will not be converted, and the means of salvation shall be taken away from you.

Jeremiah i. 5.—"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." It does appear that God hath, at different times, raised up men to perform certain great missions, and this seems to have been the case with Jeremiah. The decreed reprobation of any portion of mankind does not follow from such an admission.

Jeremiah vi. 21.—"Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish." The Jewish people are counselled first to return to God, which shows they were not reprobated. They will not amend their lives, so the curse of Heaven, that the means and instrumentalities for their good will only be the occasion of their greater fall.

Ezekiel xx. 25.—"Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." The people had cast God off, notwithstanding his holy laws, and deliverances, and mercy; so he permits them to lapse into heathen life, and so the Scripture often speaks of God doing what he only permits to be done. Statutes and judgments that were evil, as they would have them for their rule of life, they were permitted to have.

John xvii. 2.—"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." The number over which Christ has given power, is stated "*all flesh*." Therefore God hath ordained Christ to give eternal life to all mankind.

Romans viii. 29.—"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. . . . Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called," etc., etc. The two chapters, eighth and ninth of Romans, are used as the grand magazine of argument for Calvinistic election. Our space necessarily forbids entering at any length upon an exposition of these chapters. We would refer our readers to Dr. Taylor's "Key" to this Epistle. We are fully persuaded the views he sets forth are the correct explanations of these difficult texts 1.

That it seems to have been the pleasure of the Supreme God to choose the Hebrew people, in times past, to be the repository of revealed divine truth; therefore they are called the *elect, chosen, ordained of God*, etc., etc. 2. That God, in the disposition of his plans for the moral and religious improvement of the human race, could do as he determined, and that no created being had any right to question his wisdom or authority is shown and proved in some of those passages. That though his displeasure, as felt by Gentile nations—Pharoah and his people are destroyed, while the Israelites are saved, and thus God foresaw and brought about, that his name and glory might be declared—never touches the question of the final and eternal reprobation of any part of the human family. We should bear in mind that the Apostle Paul is writing, among others, to the Jews also, who were very slow to apprehend this grand truth, that in the dispensation of Christian truth that Jews and Gentiles were all fellow-heirs of the promises of divine blessings. That God had foreknown this, ordained, and predestinated that it should come to pass that the Gentile nations, in the present dispensation, as the Jews in the past, should be conformed to the image of God's Son. Our conviction is, that the whole of this reasoning about God's adoption or rejection of this or that nation, person, or people, has reference to time and the working out of his divine plans: that eternal misery or happiness is not thought of in this reference to election, etc. We think the great mistake made by those who would construe portions of Scripture to favour election views is in this, that they apply to individuals what belongs to nations, and refer transactions to eternity which belong to time. *Dr. Taylor* concludes his exposition of this Epistle by the following forcible remarks. "It is not teaching that only a *small, uncertain* number among Christians are ARBITRARILY *redeemed, elected, called, adopted, born again*, or *regenerated;* and that all the rest, by a sovereign absolute eternal DECREE, passed by or reprobated. These are no principles of Christianity, *but stand in direct contradiction to them*, and have drawn a dark veil over the grace of the Gospel, sunk the Christian world into an abject state of fear, and a false, superstitious humility, and thrown ministers into endless absurdities."

1 Cor. i. 26.—"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty are called." God had not taken men of great political power, or skilled in the world's wisdom, to propagate the doctrines of Christianity.

Ephesians i. 4.—"According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children," etc., etc. Before the world began, or before the Christian dispensation was ushered in, the Gentiles were chosen to have the doctrines of Christianity preached to them, that they might be holy, God having predestinated them to be his children.

2 Timothy ii. 10.—"I endure all things for the elects sakes, that they may also obtain salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit."—1 Peter i. 2. Paul is a firm believer that the Gentiles are called to Christian salvation, that they are foreknown and elected of God to this mercy, so he engages to preach to them, though he must endure much suffering, that they may become Christians. God wills, but man must work.

As we have stated, the doctrine of Calvinistic election and reprobation does not necessarily devolve upon us in our upholding Unitarianism. The preceding passages are the principal adduced, and our notes on these may be applied to all others.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

OUR Lord, during his personal ministry upon the earth, was in the habit of referring to a time when he would come again in judgment—of referring to his Second Coming. And so deeply had he impressed this conviction of this coming upon the minds of his disciples, that when they went forth as the Apostles of his religion, they frequently made this the theme of both their oral and written instructions to the Church. Hence all Christians, from that day to the present, have believed in a *Second Coming* of Christ.

In his second coming he is usually represented as *coming in glory*, accompanied *by angels*, and as having for his object the execution of judgment upon his enemies, and the deliverance and salvation of his followers.

With these observations I proceed to inquire, *When was Christ to come in the glory of his Father, with his angels?*

To this question, I reply,

1. *That he was to come before his disciples had accomplished their mission to the cities of Israel.*

After having commissioned them to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and preach the Kingdom of Heaven, as recorded in the tenth chapter of Matthew, he instructed them in the duties of their mission, and foreshadowed the persecutions which they would be called to endure. "But," he says, by way of encouragement, "when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, *Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.*"—Matt. x. 23.

This shows that his second coming was not to be delayed for any considerable period of time.

2. *This coming was to take place during the life-time of John.* After the master had three several times addressed Peter, saying, "feed my sheep," Peter turned to Jesus and asked concerning John, "What shall *this man* do?" Jesus saith unto him, "If I will that he *tarry till I come*, what is that to thee?" "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren that that

disciple should not die; yet Jesus saith not unto him, he shall not die, but if I will that he tarry *till I come*, what is that to thee."—John xxi. 20—24.

John did survive the coming of his master, thus verifying this prophetic intimation. This will appear as we proceed. I remark,

3. *In the third place, that the Second Coming of Christ was to be accomplished before the generation in which he lived and taught had passed away.*

Having, on one occasion, predicted the utter destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, as the signal for the final closing up of the Jewish dispensation, his "disciples came to him privately, saying, When shall these things be? What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of *the end of the world?*"—Matt. xxiv. 1—3.

That all these inquiries relate to events which were to happen at the same time, is, apparently, too obvious to need proof. And yet our English translation has furnished an excuse for denying this fact. Had the original been properly translated, it would have read thus, "When shall these things" (things just predicted, viz.: the destruction of the temple), "when shall these things be? What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of this dispensation?" viz.: "the Jewish dispensation."

And thus reading the inquiries of the disciples, we see at once that they connected the coming of Christ and the *end of the Jewish dispensation* with the destruction of the temple. And in this association of ideas there was something quite natural: the temple, in their estimation, being essential to the maintenance of the Jewish worship. That destroyed, and their splendid ritual, with all its hallowed associations, must become a thing of history.

That Jesus understood them to refer to these subjects and to no other—that he understood them to refer to the accomplishment of his prediction, relating to the destruction of the temple—*to his coming in judgment at that time*, and to the final closing up of the Jewish dispensation, is perfectly evident from the character of his reply. On any other supposition, his answer is absurd—is an abuse of that confidence which they expressed in him, by coming to him privately.

Look at his answer. "Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." These words show that he was about to direct attention to signs which would appear unto *them* and *their* cotemporaries. They also show that *in their day* there would be a constant looking for his coming—such an expectation of it as would predispose the mind to deception. Against this he cautions them, and then proceeds to specify the signs about which they inquired, and in the knowledge of which they were personally interested—*the signs of his coming.*

Among these, he enumerates *wars and rumours of wars, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes, persecutions, apostacies*, and the appearance of *false prophets.* As the last sign, the Gospel was to be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations (which was accomplished before Jerusalem was destroyed. See Rom. x. 18), and then the *end* was to come—the *end of the world, or of the dispensation*, about which they inquired.

This answer shows the character of the inquiries of his disciples, as he understood them, and, as presented, is complete in itself.

He next proceeds to give them such counsel as the exigencies of the circumstances about to invest them, seemed to require. When they saw "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet,"—and especially when they saw "Jerusalem encompassed by armies,"—then they were to "flee to the mountains." "And then," he adds, "they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels," etc. When? Jesus answers:

"Now learn a parable of the fig-tree. When its branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when *ye shall see all these things, know that it* (the coming of Christ, the destruction of the temple, the end of the Jewish dispensation) *is near, even at the doors.* Verily I say unto you *this generation shall not pass away till all* these things be fulfilled." See Matt. xxiv. 23—35.

Finally—*The Second Coming of Christ—his coming in judgment, in the glory of his Father with his angels, took place during the life-time of some who listened to his personal instructions.*

In support of this proposition I shall quote but a single passage, viz., Matt. xvi. 27—28: "*For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall reward every man according to his works.* Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here which *shall not taste of death*—shall not die—*till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.*" Comp. Mark viii. 38; ix. 1, and Luke ix. 26—27.

Any attempt to find the fulfillment of this prophecy, in the scenes of the transfiguration, must prove unavailing:

1. Because Christ did not *then* come in judgment, and

2. Because it makes solemn mockery of the words of Jesus. It represents him as invoking earnest attention to a prophecy, announcing the fact that *some of his hearers should live eight days!*

Reader, is there anything wanting in this testimony to prove that the Second Coming of Christ was, by the terms of the prophecy relating to this event, to take place before the ministry of the Apostles was accomplished; before John died, or that generation, with all who listened to the instructions of Jesus, had passed away, or tasted death? Nothing.

THE END OF THE WORLD.

Ever since the days of the renowned Miller (not the jocose gentleman of that familiar patronymic who rejoiced in the cognomen of Joe, but the Reverend Miller) there have been spasmodic

attempts to get up an end of the world. These attempts, although attended with considerable zeal, and not at all wanting in energy or excitement, have not as yet been rewarded with a very remarkable degree of success. The old world goes spinning on, regardless of prophecy, and insensible to denunciation, and as deaf to the apprehensions of the enemies of its continued existence, as to the hopes of its most ardent friends. If it is changed, it is certainly changed very little for the worse, and if it is growing old, it certainly has a very queer way of showing it.

Probably many of our readers remember the Miller excitement. How industrious mechanics and sober tradesmen made up their minds (what they had of them) that the world was coming to an end, and that they would best consult their own interests by dropping business and taking up psalm-singing. How frightened women, young and old, forsook the employments and enjoyments of their daily life, and spent days and nights in harrowing up their feelings and listening to prophetic rant. How Father Miller fixed the very day of the catastrophe, and how it wouldn't stay fixed, but was twice or thrice postponed on account of the weather, or other unforseen impediments. How the faithful got ready their ascension robes, and sat, like a flock of geese, in the attitude of expectant squatters, through the long hours of night, watching the impassive heavens, and longing for the trumpet blast which should peal the signal to "go up."

All this is now matter of history, and we should not allude to an almost forgotten delusion, but for the fact that signs are manifest, in various directions, of the revival of similar fanciful and foolish speculations. The prophecies of the Bible have long served as the *pons asinorum* of eager and credulous minds; the intellectual agility of impracticable theologians has never been so happily displayed as upon the bridge which divides the uncertain from the unknown. To reason from a doubtful or disputed text to the year or the day of the destruction of the world, was a use of the intellectual faculties whose propriety none would question, since, where nothing is known, all opinions are equal. Hence the vast hecatombs of prophetical literature, in the shape of commentaries, treatises, and sermons. Hence the multitude of apocalyptic dissertations on the Apocalypse, which, could St. John have seen among his other visions, would perhaps have induced him to give some explanations, of which the theologic mind appears to be much in need.

But the latest intelligence from the kingdom is that brought forth by the Rev. Dr. Cumming, of London. Dr. Cumming is a sensation preacher of the Scotch persuasion, and draws crowded and fashionable audiences to his prophetical ministrations. He has taken the book of Revelations under his especial charge, and has "got himself up" thereupon regardless of time or expense. In fact, he is a walking edition of the Apocalypse, and if you tap him in any direction, straightway out rushes an angel with seven vials, or a head with ten horns. Dr. Cumming is of the opinion that we live in the latter days. In his own words, "we are, in all probability, approaching the close of this dispensation." He has ciphered it all out; he has made the requisite permutations, and combinations, and resolutions of forces, and he finds that the "restoration of all things, the baptism of the earth, and the re-genesis of nature," will positively take place in the year 1867—only seven years from now! Think of it, careless and carnal-minded reader, and pass instantly a vote of thanks to the Rev. John Cumming, D.D.! Has he not warned you? Has he not written and published his invaluable works, in thirty-three volumes, duodecimo, all setting forth, more or less clearly, his own precious and unparalleled ideas on the subject of prophecy? Can it be that so much industry and application is to be suspected of having failed to establish the fact in question? No, clearly not. Listen to one of the opinions of the oracle:

"Dr. Cumming thinks that the seventh vial was poured out in 1848; that its being 'poured into the air' denotes the universality of its influence—affecting physical, social, and moral interests—its physical efforts manifesting themselves in the morific miasma prevalent during the last ten years in unprecedented intensity and area; and throwing its force in the potato rot, the vine-cholera, and an altered condition of human health and disease."

The seventh vial was poured out in 1848. Ah, fearful thought! What times we are fallen on, to be sure! and it was 'poured into the air,' too! And it is shrewdly suspected that it was productive of the potato rot! Here is a most valuable discovery, from a theological quarter, which we commend to the attention of the Horticultural Society at their next meeting. Query—is there not a mysterious connection between the breaking out of the potato rot, and the prevalence of the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland? And, as the Pope is, by the universal consent of the apocalyptic gentlemen, the Great Red Dragon of the Revelations, is it not evident that, after the pouring out of the seventh vial, he is obliged to commence hauling in his horns? And what important political bearings, too, grow out of this seventh vial! Our interpreter of Cumming goes on:

"It is during the influence of this vial that a 'great northern hail' bursts on Christendom. This is interpreted by the students of prophecy as a Russian descent on Europe, as indicated by collateral prophecies in Ezekiel."

There you have it, reader, as clear as can be—only put Ezekiel, Revelations, and Dr. Cumming together, shake them up well, and you have the end of this dispensation, the trump of Gabriel, and the ushering in of the Millenium, all in the year of grace, 1867! Let us be truly grateful to the prophetic gentleman for this valuable information; and let every one be careful about making permanent investments in anything of a sublunary nature, for all terrestial values will assuredly expire under the Cumming statute of limitations, in the year of our Lord, 1867!

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

FUN, says Hall's Journal of Health, is worth more than physic, and whoever invents or discovers a new source of supply, deserves the name of a public benefactor; and whoever can write an article the most laughter-promoting and at the same time harmless, is worthy of our gratitude and respect.

A GOOD ANSWER.—A young lady in a Sabbath School asked her class—"How soon should a child give its heart to God?" One little girl said, "When thirteen years old." Another, "Ten," and another, "Six." At length the last child in the class spoke: "Just as soon as we know who God is." Could there be a better reply.

THE LAST WORDS OF JOHN BROWN.—"I die alone, responsible for my own operations, and ask for no sympathy. I am satisfied in my own belief, but desire no other man to believe as I do, unless his conscience and philosophy approve. I am singly responsible for my own acts, good or bad. If right or wrong, the consequence rests only upon myself."

A WORTHY Scotch couple, when asked how their son had broken down so early in life, gave the following explanation: "When we begun life together we worked hard and lived upon porridge and such like, gradually adding to our comforts as our means improved, until we were able at length to dine off a bit of roast meat, and sometimes a boilt chuckie (chicken); but as for Jack, our son, he worked backward, and 'begun with the chuckie first.'"

A MOST MELANCHOLY AFFAIR.—A few days ago, Sarah Alderson, a servant girl with Mrs. Dale of Newport, below Stockton-on-Tees, was taken away to the York Lunatic Asylum. It appears that the girl had gone pretty regularly to Church with her mistress, but was requested by two of her companions to go with them on Sunday night week to the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Middlesbro'. Her mistress consented. A revival service was held that night, and the girl came home from the meeting in a fearful state of mind. Her very features were affected. She said she had been converted. Her companions and she had been so frightened by the influence of the service, that they were obliged to be accompanied home. The preacher had said something about the girl taking care of herself, or the Devil would get her. The whole thing had so affected her that she became delirous, and was sent home. Her friends had no control over her. She had escaped from them during the night, and was found next morning in the cow-byre, holding two of the cows by the tail, singing hymns and songs, and shouting and praying. They tried all means to restore her to rationality, but failed. She was in a most desperate condition, and has been sent away to York, raving mad. We fear that the noble plea of an apostle of Christianity, "God hath not given unto us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind," can scarcely be set up for these services.—*Stockton Gazette.*

AN ECCENTRIC PASTOR, named Bowles, in a country town, purchased a whistle, and when his hearers went to sleep he emitted from it a very shrill sound. All were awake and stood up to hear him. "Well," he said, "you are smart specimens of humanity," as he slowly gazed at his wondering people; "when I preach the Gospel, you go to sleep; when I play the fool, you are awake."

PUNCH'S SEVEN FOOLS.—1. The envious man, who sends away his mutton because the person next to him is eating venison. 2. The jealous man, who spreads his bed with stinging nettles, and then sleeps in it. 3. The proud man, who gets wet through, sooner than ride in the carriage of his inferior. 4. The litigious man, who goes to law in the hopes of ruining his opponent, and gets ruined himself. 5. The extravagant man, who buys a herring, and takes a cab to carry it home. 6. The angry man, who learns to play the tambourine because he is annoyed by the playing of his neighbour's piano. 7. The ostentatious man, who illumines the outside of his house most brilliantly, and sits inside in the dark.

"GUDE AULD COMFORTABLE DOCTRINE."—The Rev. Dr. Hutcheson, professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University (A.D. 1729-1746), and author of an "Inquiry into our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue"—a work which, in its day, attracted much attention—was son of the Rev. John Hutcheson, minister of the Presbyterian congregation of Armagh. Stuart, in his "History of Armagh," gives the following anecdote of the estimate formed of the professor's first services in his father's pulpit:—"His father, labouring under a slight rheumatic affection, deputed him to preach in his place on a cold and rainy Sunday. About two hours after Francis had left Ballyrea (Mr. H.'s residence, some two miles from Armagh), the rain abated, the sun shone forth, the day became serene and warm, and Mr. Hutcheson, feeling anxious to collect the opinions of his congregation on the merits of his favourite son, proceeded directly to the city. But how was he astonished and chagrined when he met almost the whole of his flock coming from the meeting-house, with strong marks of disappointment and disgust visible on their countenances! One of the elders, a native of Scotland, addressed the surprised and mortified father thus:—'We a' feel muckle wae for your mishap, reverend Sir; but it canna' be concealed. Your silly loon, Frank, has fashed a' the congregation wi' his idle cackle; for he has been babbling this oor about a gude and benevolent God, and that the sauls o' the heathens themsels will gang to heeven if they follow the light of their consciences. Not a word does the daft boy ken, speer, nor say about the gude auld comfortable doctrine of election, reprobation, original sin, and faith. Hoot, mon, awa' wi' sic a fellow.' The only members who waited for the end of the sermon were Mr. Johnson, of Knappa, Mr. M'Geough, and the clerk."—*Non-Subscriber.*

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